



H.Res. 1270 – Commending the efforts of those who sought to block an international arms transfer destined for Zimbabwe, where the government has unleashed a campaign of violence and intimidation against members of the political opposition, and for other purposes

FLOOR SITUATION

H.Res. 1270 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) on June 12, 2008. The resolution was referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, but was never considered.

H.Res. 1270 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on June 18, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.Res. 1270 resolves that the House of Representatives:

- Recognizes and commends the efforts of southern African trade unions, religious leaders, and advocacy groups to raise awareness about an attempted weapons transfer from China to Zimbabwe;
- Recognizes and commends the efforts of southern African governments which acted to block the shipment;
- Urges the United States to continue to work with African governments and multilateral institutions to compel the Mugabe regime to respect the will of its citizens and find a peaceful and timely solution to the current political standoff; and
- Urges the U.S. Permanent Representative at the United Nations to advocate for an international moratorium on all shipments of arms, weapons, and related goods and services to Zimbabwe until the current political crisis has been resolved and democracy, human rights, and the rule of law are respected by the Government of Zimbabwe.

BACKGROUND

Following the contested and controversial presidential and parliamentary elections in Zimbabwe on March 29, 2008, a Chinese vessel arrived in South Africa carrying a shipment of weapons for the Zimbabwean Defense Force. The shipment reportedly contained AK-47 ammunition, rocket-propelled grenades, and mortars. Believing that shipment of this cargo to Zimbabwe would further degrade the security situation in Zimbabwe, South African freight and dock workers refused to unload or transport the shipment. A South African court additionally blocked the cargo transfer and prevented the vessel's passage through South African waters. It was reported in the press that the governments of Mozambique and Tanzania also denied the vessel permission to dock at their ports. The cargo vessel returned to China in late April, unable to dock in southern Africa.

Zimbabwe has been in a state of political standoff following the contested presidential and parliamentary elections of March 29, 2008. The unemployment rate in Zimbabwe is approximately 80 percent, according to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). The nation also suffers from the world's highest inflation rate as well – almost 100,000 percent today, according to *The Economist*. At least three million Zimbabweans have fled the recent turmoil in the nation. The Zimbabwean African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), currently led by President Robert Mugabe, has controlled the executive and legislative branches of the country for 28 years. The Republic of Zimbabwe is a landlocked country in southern Africa which borders Botswana, Zambia, and Mozambique.



LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

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